

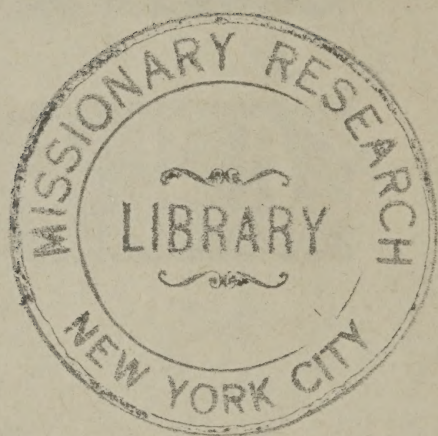
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INDIA'S

FOOD

CRISIS





# INDIA'S FOOD CRISIS

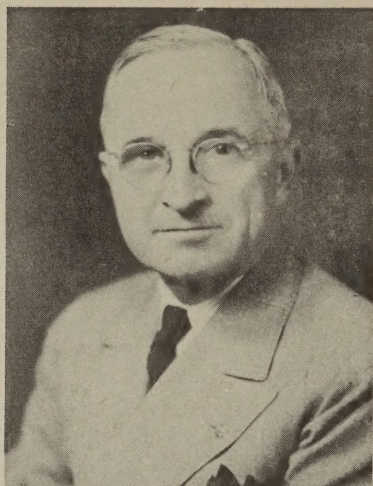
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# INDIA'S FOOD CRISIS

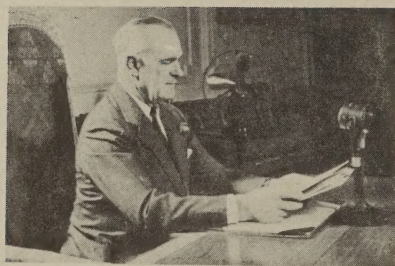


PRESIDENT HARRY S. TRUMAN

MR. HARRY S. TRUMAN

*President of the  
United States*

REPLIES TO A MESSAGE  
REGARDING  
THE FOOD CRISIS  
IN INDIA



HIS EXCELLENCY  
FIELD MARSHALL VISCOUNT WAVELL

*from*

HIS EXCELLENCY  
FIELD MARSHALL VISCOUNT  
WAVELL  
*Viceroy of India*



The following is the text of a message to Mr. Harry S. Truman, President of the United States, from His Excellency Field Marshal Viscount Wavell, Viceroy of India:

"Reports indicating that quantities of wheat programmed for India by Combined Food Board are being cut down have caused great anxiety here. I sincerely trust they are ill founded and would be grateful for an assurance. Impression seems to have got about that late rains in northern India have changed the whole position. This is entirely incorrect. The rain came too late to prevent serious damage and total rainfall for cold weather was about  $1/3$  to  $1/2$  of average. If the yields have improved in any part of the country as compared with our estimates (which remains to be seen) procurement cannot be affected in any case until the second half of 1946. Our demands for the first half of 1946 relate to previous harvest in which our estimated deficiency is three million tons against programmed allotment by Combined Food Board of only 1.4 million tons. I can personally assure you that allotments proposed by Combined Food Board are urgently required to prevent serious famine here. And I am sure you will appreciate our feelings about any proposal to transfer food grains so urgently needed in India to ex-enemy countries."

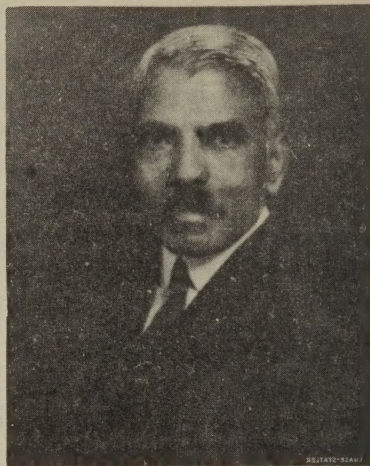
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The following is the text of the reply of Mr. Harry S. Truman, President of the United States, to the message from His Excellency Field Marshal Viscount Wavell, Viceroy of India:

"I have received through the Indian Agent General in Washington, your personal message with regard to the critical food situation in India. You may be sure that the gravity of the food shortage in India is thoroughly recognized by the United States Government and is receiving the fullest and most sympathetic consideration on the highest levels of the Government. I am aware that the rains which occurred in some sections of India in the latter part of February have done little to ameliorate the seriousness of the situation as pointed out to me by the distinguished Chairman of the Indian Food Delegation which recently visited this country."

*From Newsreel March 9, 1946*

INDIA faces a famine so large that unless she obtains cereals — two million tons before the end of June and a further two million tons by the end of the year — that ten million of her people will die of starvation. The Indian situation is due to natural calamities — a tidal wave, floods and a prolonged drought, the like of which has not been experienced during more than fifty years.



SIR RASASWAMI MUDALIAR

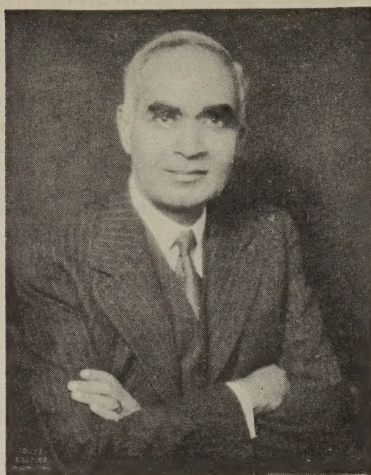
We are not asking for mere charity but shall pay for every grain that we obtain from any country and still feel grateful for the generosity of the American people which enables us to get the food stuffs. It is after our very bitter experience of the famine we had in 1943 in Bengal when nearly two million people died that we are certain that a calamity on a bigger scale and more widespread will now overtake us unless relief is forthcoming.

Might I not tell the people of America in particular that even in those days of famine in Bengal and throughout the period of the war we stinted nothing and



in fact gave more than we could afford to the tens of thousands of troops from your country who were stationed in India and today we turn to you for help in the remembrance of those days of war, trouble and anxiety, we turn to your farmers, to the housewives, to a people who we know have deep humanitarian sympathies, for help and assistance in this predicament and we feel sure we shall not be appealing in vain.

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THE HON.  
SIR GIRJA SHANKAR BAJPAI

*Speech by*

THE HON.

SIR GIRJA SHANKAR BAJPAI

*Agent General for India*

AT THE

UNRRA CONFERENCE

*Atlantic City, March 21, 1946*

THE outlook for India is famine. In the south and the west of the land 120 million people are, in John Bright's phrase, already within uneasy hearing of "the flutterings of the wings of the Angel of Death." Five to fifteen million may die if our requirements of cereals (four million tons) are not met. For us death by starvation is not a flight of lurid fancy or a remote memory. A little over two years ago one and one-half million people died in Bengal. This was the official estimate. The unofficial estimate was double this figure.

The immediate cause of the threatened disaster is cyclone, tidal wave and drought. Crops have failed both in the south and in the north; in the south from a sequence of inundation and drought, in the north from drought. The fact that our irrigation system is larger than that of the next ten largest in the world, including that of the United States, is in complete protection against the dire caprice of the season. Only 17 per cent of the cultivated area is irrigated.

Historical retrospect however must seek other causes, the first of which is the cessation of rice imports from Burma. We were before the war net importers of a million and a quarter tons of rice; practically all of it came from Burma. Since December, 1941, these imports have stopped.

Secondly, a subsistence farm economy such as ours leaves little surplus to build up reserves. What little reserves we had we exhausted in the war to feed our own armies numbering two million, which could not be rationed; to meet, at least in part, the requirements of Allied Forces and to support Ceylon and the Middle East to which areas we exported 2.185 million tons.



The Director General has referred to three forms of self-support:

1. All-out production,
2. Continuation of wartime control (a) of procurement and (b) distribution,
3. Intensification of food conservation measures.

What we have done in these respects is open to and will stand the test of the most searching scrutiny.

From seven to ten million acres of additional land has been brought under food crops. Normally this would yield an extra two million tons, or if irrigation and fertilization could be ensured, even more. War, with its strain on transportation and shortage of machinery and chemicals, has hindered full utilization of the additional area. An annual increase in population of five million has barely kept increased production equal to subsistence demand. Abnormal seasonal adversity has more than neutralized efforts to increase output of cereals.

Since 1943 Procurement has been a Government monopoly. There are more than 50 million holdings in India cultivated by an equal number of farmers. Procurement of the surplus in any case exiguous from such a multitude, has been a tremendous problem. Nevertheless it has been successfully solved. All that Government leaves to the farmer is 14 ounces of cereals per head. This is to cover not only his personal requirements but also those of his livestock. Sales are through agencies controlled by Government at controlled prices.

Rationing has also been under control since 1943. There has been no break in Government control. 55 million city dwellers and more than an equal number in rural areas have had their ration of cereals recently reduced to 9.6 ounces per head. A population almost equal to the total population of the United States is limited to an allowance per individual of 960 calories. Since poverty and custom restrict this human mass to supplementary foods of vegetable origin and the output of these has also been reduced by seasonal causes, each individual in effect, especially amongst the poor who are the most numerous, will have no more than 960 calories. This is barely enough for subsistence.

As to conservation of food, waste is an accompaniment of plenty. Where instead of plenty or even sufficiency there is dire want, there is no scope for waste and therefore no scope to avoid wastage, nor can grain be saved for human beings from cattle. In India there are practically no stall-fed cattle.

The Director General said: "Those who fought the enemy deserve to be considered first." We take no exception to this statement. All that we claim is that we also fought the enemy — fought him in Europe, in Africa and in Asia — fought him to defeat. Because we have not dramatized our share in victory it does not follow that our share in it has been unreal or meagre and yet our claim is the

most modest of all. It is not a claim for what most of our people would regard as luxuries — meats or fats. It is a claim for a handful of wheat or maize or barley or rice. We seek only bread and we seek it only to live. For us there is no tightening of belts because you cannot straighten a straight line.

The Director General said: "Peace cannot be built on famine." We agree and we hope it is realized that this is a universal, not a regional truth.

It has been suggested that the Combined Food Board be enlarged. To this we have no objection, but if it is to be enlarged to include countries in deficit or agencies which speak for such countries, then we claim a seat for India on this Board. UNRRA cannot speak for us because we are not entitled to UNRRA aid though we are members of it. The other nations cannot speak for us because they cannot represent our needs as effectively as we can.

#### TRIBUTE TO GOVERNOR LEHMAN

This speech must end on a note of tribute to the Director General. The years since the inception of UNRRA in this city have been arduous years, anxious years and at times thankless. Industry, intelligence, even imagination, could not have sufficed to create, to sustain, to guide and to inspire UNRRA. Faith, fortitude and moral fervor alone could have accomplished this Herculean labor. That it has been successfully accomplished is evidence of the unanimity and eloquence of the tributes already paid. This praise and this applause will perhaps live only in individual memories, but the glow of your achievements will shine along the expanding vistas of history.

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HERBERT HOOVER

### HOOVER'S STATEMENT ON INDIA'S FOOD SITUATION

*"Many Districts on Edge of Precipice"  
"Death Roll Might Be Too Terrible to  
Contemplate"*

Washington, April 30, 1946

"INDIAN PROVINCES containing about 230,000,000 people are involved in food difficulties," said Mr. Herbert Hoover at a press conference in Bangalore on April 26 according to the Times of India correspondent. Mr. Hoover said: "The enormity of the food problem must be expressed in numbers. This is the only way its dimensions can be demonstrated. But figures are a poor vehicle with which to convey the extent of the danger and human misery involved.

"The causes of India's food difficulties come from three directions:

"Firstly, India normally imports considerable food supplies especially from Burma. This source has been largely curtailed for this year. Secondly, South India has suffered from a disastrous drought. Thirdly, the standard of living of great masses of the Indian people has always been low and a marginal group has always been on the borderline of what we in America would regard as starvation.

"After making all statistical deductions as a result of certain local parts of the provinces being self-supporting and of other localities being less affected and of farmers who supply themselves, the remaining number of people in jeopardy of life runs into tens of millions unless they obtain additional food from outside.

"There has been drastic rationing in large sections in the deficit areas in order to lengthen domestic supplies. Before the recent reduction in ration, the calory content of authorized ration plus some supplements probably amounted to less than 1600 calories, mostly cereals. Now the ration has been reduced to

about 1400 calories daily per person including such supplements as the mass of the people can find.

"The intelligent use of rationing has prevented stark starvation of the widespread famine-type familiar in India up to this time. However, we, today, motored through parched districts in Mysore where even this ration has begun to break down. About two-thirds of the cereal ration is the less nutritious groundnuts and cattle food. If this were all the story the situation might be looked at as a great sea of misery awakening the world's sympathy but not one unparalleled in potential tragedy. But tragedy lies in the fact that large districts cannot, without outside supplies, maintain even the present reduced ration for more than 30 to 90 days. Many districts are on the edge of a precipice. It is impossible to hazard what the death roll might be if there were no imports into deficit areas; it would be too terrible to contemplate. Every ton of food imported into these areas will lessen the loss of life."

Continuing, Mr. Hoover said:

"In order to carry this ration including the supplements through on the present meagre basis of about 1400 calories, the Indian Government officials estimate that they must have arrivals in the deficit areas of rice, wheat and millets amounting to 346,000 tons in May, 315,000 tons in June, and 441,000 tons in July. Only about 300,000 tons appear now to be actually en route from overseas. Some of these supplies will not arrive until July. Government officials estimate a minimum need of 522,000 tons in August and September. They will need supplies beyond that date but after that time, world supplies should be easier.

"There has been great delay in the dispatch of ships and there are areas which should have had major supplies long before now. We are informed that there is a surplus in Siam from the last harvest of somewhere between one million and one and a half million tons of rice. There have been interminable arguments ever since last October on acquiring it. A comparatively small amount has so far been shipped. This, however, is not time for recrimination but rather to make recommendations to meet the situation. The first of these remedies lies in Siam."

Mr. Hoover added:

"Siam is nearby. Rice could quickly be brought into the famine districts. If Siamese rice could now be brought into play for various nations in this quarter of the world it would go a long way to solve the immediate problem. Another source



of possible immediate aid would be for Australia to expedite her programme of shipments of wheat to India and begin at once the deliveries of quantities which hitherto have been reserved for later months in the year. It takes three weeks to bring food from Australia whereas it will take the better part of six weeks to bring it from North America. Certainly it cannot arrive in time from North America even if all the needs of India were available from that source which is not so.

"The Indian problem is part of the whole world problem. We estimated that the world's cereals need, on the 1st of April to maintain the then ration, was about 11,000,000 tons while the total supply commercially available was only about 6,000,000. From this gap of 5,000,000 tons the potential danger to Europe parallels that in Asia. The American people with extraordinary effort and with all their impulses to serve starving humanity can make up but a portion of the 5,000,000 tons gap. I have made some suggestions at Cairo for an equal effort from other nations to bridge the gap.

"In this emergency of the immediate weeks, the deficient areas in India must canvass every possible additional source—not only Australia and Siam but borrowing from Indian surplus areas for repayment later; such sources as Burma, Iraq and Java and borrowing cereals from Egypt against the new crop. There needs to be more co-ordination of effort in the whole Indian Ocean area. When all this has been done, a large part of the solution must come from the western hemisphere. The situation of these stricken people must appeal to every humane person in the world. It is not insoluble but co-operation and devotion from every quarter is essential. The American people will stretch every resource to help."

RAYMOND SWING  
ON  
INDIA'S FOOD CRISIS

Washington, March 13th., 1946

*The following is the full text of a broadcast by Raymond Swing, the eminent Radio Commentator on the American Broadcasting Company at 7:15 p.m. on March 12, 1946: —*

ONE of the most arresting facts in today's news is an offer by the Soviet Union to make available five hundred thousand tons of grain to France. It will be set down in Black Sea ports for the French to come and get. The French are to buy it, which they can more easily do than to ship it. The purchase would go a long way to maintain minimum living conditions in France.

Just at this moment the United States is being implored and importuned to reduce its own food consumption for the benefit of countries threatened with mass starvation because of the grain shortage. The shortage is crippling the work of UNRRA which administers food on a relief basis. It is threatening the food supply of countries with resources to buy food. People may read of the Russian offer with considerable astonishment. For UNRRA is preparing to bring aid to the Ukrainian and White Russian Republics on a relief basis. It must be noted, however, that the help the Russians are to get in these regions is in fats and oils, not in grains. But even recognizing this distinction, there still may be cause for astonishment.

**WHY RUSSIANS' GRAIN OFFER ASTONISHING**

The Russians are maintaining large armies in Eastern Europe today, nine hundred thousand in Roumania, seven hundred thousand in Bulgaria, nearly as many in Hungary, and are doing so primarily because of the food shortage in Russia. The troops are quartered in food-producing countries, where they are described as armies of occupation. But the basic reason for their presence is that they can be better fed there than if they were at home, and being there they leave more food at home for home consumption.



Still another cause for astonishment may be that the Soviet Union has not counted at this time as a land with a food surplus, and it has not taken any part in devising the schemes by which we and the Canadians and the Argentine and Australia as surplus countries are doling out what we can scrape up to relieve the worst of the starvation abroad. But let me suggest that the astonishment over this Russian action should not be angry. Granted, the Russians are playing politics with their food. Granted, they are undoubtedly making a considerable sacrifice to do so. They unquestionably are supplying grain to France with the intention of influencing the coming election and strengthening Communist influence in France. This is rivalry.

But if there is to be rivalry, this at any rate is a better kind than an armament race. It is better to feed people than to threaten them with war. It is better to try to win friends and followers by offers of food and well-being, than it is by presentiments of hostility. And best of all, here is a rivalry which we can meet. We are a great food-producing country with a visible surplus. We can send much food abroad. We can send still more than we are planning to. We, too, should not be ashamed to pursue political objectives in this kind of rivalry. We ought to care for the reason that our own safety, security and liberty are involved in the security of others. And if we care we could find ways to provide a substantial quantity of food, with which we could accomplish a great deal of political as well as humanitarian good. Such rivalry would be much more to the point than that of atomic bombs, battleships and other symbols of strength. It would make us actually stronger than these, if one looks far enough ahead and sees deeply enough what constitutes strength.

#### INDIA NEEDS GRAIN

I am thinking in particular of a way to rival this move of the Soviet Union in selling grain to France. We may be thankful that the Russian grain is intended for France, where we already are helping in many ways. If the Russians were sending the grain to India we should have cause for something more than astonishment. It happens India needs more grain than the Soviet Union can offer, and the opportunity to influence the future of India still belongs to us. One can call it an opportunity simply in the sense of being a humanitarian privilege. But it is also a political opportunity, a chance to do something for ourselves as well as the Indians.

For at this hour of history the Indians stand at the cross-roads. They can take the turning to self-government, law and order, peaceful development, and full

membership in western civilization. Or they can yield to despair, disillusionment, and bitterness, and go into mass disorder and violence that will tear their social order to pieces. If they do that they put themselves into the keeping of the only political movement that thrives from chaos, Communism. The Indians are tired of British promises. They are on the point of losing faith in the United States. And if they suffer a mass starvation, in which millions die, and tens of millions suffer the pangs of under-nourishment, we shall have lost the certainty of keeping India on our side. And to say that, is to speak of losing from our side one-fifth of the population of the world, for we must not forget that India's population is well over four hundred million.

At the moment there is not much Communism in India. But if India lapses into widespread violence, it will cease to obey the old Congress Party and Moslem League leadership. The recent rioting in India, in which hundreds were killed, was set off by the mutinies. But the casualties were almost exclusively among civilians, who were driven to violence by Communists against the advice and exhortations of the older parties. A change has come over Indian mobs. Twenty years ago they could be dispersed by rifles firing into the air. Today they refuse to break up, until ten or more volleys are fired into the crowds. And if India goes in for mob violence on a national scale, as it well may, only those political leaders will keep their influence who go along with the aroused people and do not set themselves against the frenzy.

### PROSPECTS OF INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

Let no one be so out of touch with the India of today as to suggest that if we let the Indians buy our grain we shall only be prolonging British rule and delaying Indian independence. The truth is that India will have its independence, in one way or another, almost immediately. The day of English rule has lasted too long, and that day is just at one minute before midnight. What we shall be furthering, with food, is continued association of India with the Western world. We shall be keeping nearly a third of Asia in a state of friendly association. If we lose India we lose a people outnumbering us three to one, capable of putting a vast army into the field, and already building up its industry at a rate to have become the fifth industrial nation of the world. An angry, awakened and armed India turned against the West would be something to fear.

No doubt I am over-simplifying, in suggesting that India will stay with Western civilization if it receives some food right away, and will be lost to the



West if it does not. But these alternatives underlie any analysis of the Indian situation. They cannot be wisely disregarded.

### **SAVING INDIA FROM MASS STARVATION**

What it will take to save India from mass starvation is four million tons of grain, two millions of it needed by the end of June, the other two millions by the end of the year. It need not be wheat. It were better if a good part of it were rice, but even corn will be welcome even if the Indians are not accustomed to it. The amount really is remarkably small in relation to the size of the population which will be affected. About a hundred and thirty million people are involved; this is non-farm population of India. For all of India the grain available comes to forty-eight million tons, of which forty millions will stay on the farms, and will give the farm population a diet of less than fourteen hundred calories. Then the Indian government hopes to induce farmers to deliver eight million tons for the rest of the population, which would be enough to provide a diet of six hundred and forty calories, which is about half of what is needed to keep up the lowest level of health. This figure of six hundred and forty calories obviously spells death for millions. And what the Indians are asking is enough grain — the four million tons — to bring this to nine hundred and sixty calories. That still is well below a tolerable minimum. But it is enough to prevent mass starvation.

The Indians are here with a food mission asking to receive this grain, not as relief, but as buyers. They have money to pay for it. They can demonstrate that they are in their present plight, not because of lack of foresight, or poor organization. India has just suffered one of the worst droughts in its history. Compared with 1943, the year of the last famine, India is in much better condition to deal with the crisis. Three years ago there was no organization to distribute and ration food. Now rationing is well-established, and the Indian Government can undertake to distribute all the food it gets, and even to keep it out of the black market. Three years ago, with a shortage of five percent in the food supply of Bengal, death from famine numbered a million and a half. This year the shortage covers a far greater area, and is twenty-five percent. But that does not necessarily mean five times the number of deaths, though it could. What it means depends on what India is allotted by the Combined Food Boards, and then what its agents can obtain here, and in the other grain surplus countries. At the moment India is getting some Australian wheat. Now it must have the additional four million tons, which will permit a nine hundred and sixty calory diet.

If I have stressed the emergency in India it is not because I recommend a

greater allocation to India at the expense of the lands in Europe where starvation also will be stalking, but because the interests of India can well count as being, at least, of equal importance. The Europeans have many special pleaders in this country, while the Indians do not. And I should say I include Ceylon in India. It is in extreme danger, and thirty thousand tons of grain would keep six million people from starvation.

If we value our western ways of life, if we want our ideas to permeate and guide the Eastern world, here is an opportunity to get more from a modest investment than we are likely to do for decades. All we need is to wake up and care what happens to the world.

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# INDIA'S APPEAL TO U.S.A.

## BROADCAST BY LEADER OF FOOD DELEGATION

Washington, March 22, 1946

*The following is the text of a radio interview which Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar gave to Mr. Charles Worcester on the C.B.S. Country Journal Programme on March 16th, 1946: —*

MR. WORCESTER: Sir Ramaswami . . . would you tell us first, briefly the reason for the present critical food shortage in India?

SIR RAMASWAMI: During the war, owing to shipping shortage, our imports were under the normal of what we were getting before the war, but when Burma was cut off during the war with Japan, our supplies were practically nil, except for dribblets that came from overseas. We have lived mostly on our stocks, but these were exhausted very early in the war. Last year after peace had been restored we felt fairly happy, but at the end of last year, a cyclone or tornado, followed by a tidal wave and floods, and lastly prolonged droughts such as we have not had during 50 years, have blasted our hopes, and we are faced with a shortage of grains.

MR. WORCESTER: Just how much food do you require to supply the minimum amount which you need?

SIR RAMASWAMI: We are already living on rations in most parts of the country and in all the cities of India the ration is one pound per adult and one-half pound for those below twelve years. On that basis we will require over seven million tons to carry us through this year, but since February 1st we have reduced even this ration to twelve ounces per adult and six for children, and on this basis we will require at least four and one-half million tons to carry us through the year.

MR. WORCESTER: When you speak of this 12-ounce ration, how does that compare with an adequate diet?

SIR RAMASWAMI: Our cereals are the main food for most of the people and the

12-ounce ration gives them about 1220 calories as against the 2200 which is required to keep an adult fairly happy.

MR. WORCESTER: In other words, your ration has been cut to just half of what is considered a minimum fair ration?

SIR RAMASWAMI: That is unfortunately so.

MR. WORCESTER: I imagine it is about a third of the average calories for Americans, which is, I believe, about 3,000.

SIR RAMASWAMI: So I have been informed.

MR. WORCESTER: What arrangements do you have for the operation of this rationing? You have it cut to 12 ounces — how is that ration supplied?

SIR RAMASWAMI: I can speak fairly definitely of South India, which counts for a population of 120 millions. In this area, the administration has taken over the requisitioning of all foreign supplies. The farmer is just left the minimum for his consumption for the year, a little more than one pound per head because the farmers must have, as our guest speaker said, a little more than ordinary people to have the stamina to do the farming. The rest is taken by the Government, and of course paid for. That is a monopoly procurement by the Government. Then, we have a very strict rationing system. In all urban cities the adult has a card to present to get his twelve ounces where the food is controlled. In rural areas to a certain extent the same principle is adopted so that the village also adjusts itself by rationing its population.

MR. WORCESTER: Of course your need now is immediate, but in general, is there a chance for increasing food production in India?

SIR RAMASWAMI: We hope to do our very best to do that, and I might say that some of the land which could produce rice is devoted to the production of jute. Through the war, we did it to help the Allies and without burlap you could not have sent the needed supplies to your Armies abroad. To produce this jute, we had to forego the cultivation of paddy. We hope to start producing maximum quantities of paddy instead of the cultivation of jute.

MR. WORCESTER: I certainly hope that you will be able to obtain the supplies. How many people would be affected if increased food supplies are not made available?

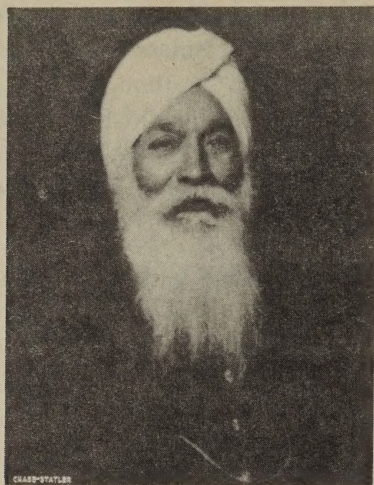
SIR RAMASWAMI: Well, as you may be aware, in the 1943 famine in Bengal, which was concerned only with a smaller area and with fifty million people, the



official estimate was that one and one-half million people died of pure starvation. Unofficial estimate is three million. Now the area is much more widespread and it is estimated that easily ten million people may die of starvation, and I do hope that your great country, which is one of the greatest, would remember not only the needs of Europe, but also the far distant countries like India, which though distant geographically, I hope are as near to your heart as any people are.

MR. WORCESTER: Thank you very much for being with us to-day, Sir Ramaswami.

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SARDAR SANT SINGH

*Statement by*

SIR KHWAJA NAZIMUDDIN

SARDAR SANT SINGH

AND

HABIB. I. RAHIMTOOLA

*Members of the India Food Delegation  
to the United States and Canada*

*April 2, 1946*

SINCE its arrival in the United States on the 4th of March, our delegation has used every opportunity to present to the Combined Food Board and the American authorities concerned, the stark realities of the present food crisis in India.

We, three members of the delegation, have also met sections of the American public and a number of press and radio correspondents.

On the eve of our return home, we wish to express our gratitude to the American public and the press for their ready sympathy and eagerness to help.

Mere sympathy, however, cannot avoid mass starvation or prevent a single death. By the end of June, India must have two million long tons of cereals — wheat and rice — and, during the course of 1946, another two million tons.

This is NOT a target we are aiming at or a bargaining position we take, but a statement of the irreducible minimum requirement. Unless we get this quantity between 5 to 10 million people may starve to death.

To give us only a percentage of this demand is to doom millions, not to food shortage and malnutrition, but to certain death.

India sent us to America because Washington is the headquarters of the Combined Food Board, the body which controls the exportable surplus of all the countries of the world except Russia. India can purchase her food requirements only with the permission of this Board.

Under normal circumstances we should have refrained from making any suggestion to the great people of the United States as to how they can help India



to buy the food she needs, but, in our desperate need, we venture to draw their attention to the fact that, with the prospect of a bumper crop, this country can afford to reduce substantially its "carry-over" of 4 million tons and make the quantity saved immediately available to India. The risk, if any, would be negligible but the step will create an abiding impression of American goodwill towards India.

We want to emphasize that the present rations in India amount to only 960 calories per capita — the barest minimum to keep body and soul together.

India's demand is the cry of one-fifth of humanity and of a people who have denuded themselves of all reserves during the war. Cereals form 80% of our food and the ration we seek to maintain is less than that of former enemies.

We go back confident that the U.S.A. and Canada will not fail us; that their people would make the surpluses available and that they will act at once in every possible way to ensure that India gets her minimum requirements and is saved from a famine worse than any in history.



HABIB. I. RAHIMTOOLA



SIR KHWAJA NAZIMUDDIN

